

Islam
The War *and* Missions
or
The New Era in the Near East

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Price of this pamphlet 10c each;
\$1.00 per dozen, carriage prepaid;
\$7.00 per 100, carriage extra.

Islam, The War and Missions

AN ADDRESS

BY

SAMUEL M. ZWEMER

Most people to-day have their eyes riveted and their hearts fixed on the Western front of the great world battlefield. That is where our boys are, and they have taken our hearts with them; we watch day by day the news, rejoicing in every victory and accepting the loss of those who are laying down their lives with joy, because we believe that our cause is just. Yet the deeper issues of this conflict and the final decisions of the world war are not on the Western but on the Eastern front of the battle. Not in France and Belgium, not in Russia, but in Central Asia and Mesopotamia and in Asia Minor the final decision is expected that will make the world a safe place for democracy, and that will also prove whether our democracy is safe for the world.

The stupendous tragedy of this war, its relation to the greatest of all the non-Christian religions, and the responsibilities and urgencies that are born from this relation, that crowd out through this

relation, bring us face to face with the supreme task of the Church of Christ, namely, to carry the Gospel to two hundred million Moslems.

We need not stop to prove that this war is the greatest world tragedy, but we may pause for a moment to reiterate, that of all the non-Christian religions there is none that is so strong in its affirmations, none that is so defiant in its denials, none that is so baffling in its difficulties, placed like great stumbling-blocks in the pathway of missions, as the religion of Mohammed. And there is none other of the non-Christian religions which has met and defeated, yea, wiped out Christianity, supplanting the Cross by the Crescent and destroying whole bishoprics, until North Africa scarcely knows the memory of the Church Fathers and the great Church of Christ established there in the early centuries.

Nor need we prove that when we speak of Islam we touch a vital issue for every denomination engaged in foreign missions and for every person who has true patriotism, whether he be from Great Britain or France or Russia or America. To begin with, our largest home missionary problem, without any possibility of dispute, is Mohammedanism. Where on the map of our possessions, where throughout all our states and territories can you find a single compact, unevangelized unit as large as the 340,000 untouched, unreached American Mohammedans of the Philippine Islands? Where under the Stars and Stripes are polygamy and slavery still allowed for diplomatic and political reasons, save for the American Mohammedan population? And as regards Great Britain, well may King George call himself, because he is indeed Christian at heart, "De-

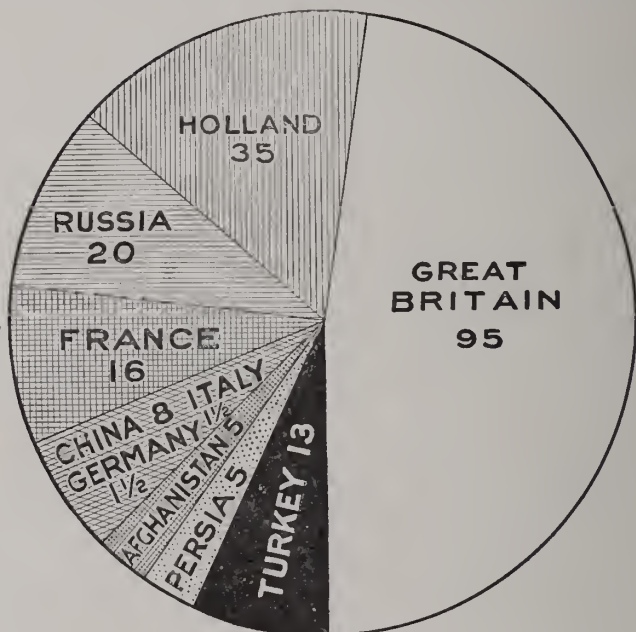
fender of the Faith," since he has more Mohammedans than nominal Christians under the sway of his imperial scepter.

Not only so, but this greatest of all the non-Christian religions has also been the most difficult, the most neglected, the most baffling of all missionary problems. The Moravian Church with all its heroism never seriously faced Islam. The Roman Catholic Church, with its glorious record of sacrifice and service for many centuries before the Reformation and since the Reformation, has never touched the Moslem world aggressively to evangelize it, with the single exception of the economic work of the White Fathers, within the last two or three decades, in Africa. And when we speak of Protestant missions and attempt a true exhibit of what we have accomplished in the Moslem world, from Morocco to the Philippine Islands, and from the unoccupied fields of Central Asia to Zanzibar, the exhibit is more an apology for our apathy than a proof of our enthusiasm and our enterprise.

This greatest of all non-Christian religions had before the war grown strong and had also grown weak. It had spread throughout Africa and was disintegrating in its old centers of Egypt, Syria, and Turkey long before the war. When we think of the Mohammedan world at large in 1914 we can see it restless, throbbing, heaving with great internal changes and conscious everywhere of external perils to Islam.

Politically, the Moslem world had already been divided. Two hundred million Moslems—that was the conservative estimate at the Lucknow Conference of the Moslem world population. Of these 200,000,000, 90,000,000 were under the British flag, 20,000,000 were in French colonial possessions, and nearly the same number in

Russia. Look at the diagram here given and you can see at a glance that the total population of 200,000,000 was shared half-and-



BEFORE THE WAR

half between Great Britain and the rest of the world. In other words, before the war Great Britain was responsible for the economic, the social, the moral, the religious progress, of one-half of all the followers of Mohammed, the Prophet of Arabia. Seven-eighths of the Moslem world were living under Christian governments and Christian protectorates even before the war, and only a

very small segment, 13,000,000, were in what is called independent Turkey, and a few millions more in Afghanistan and Arabia. But the vast majority, including all the progressive Mohammedan races, those of Egypt, those of Nigeria, those throughout India, north and south, and the Mohammedans of Malaysia, were enjoying the liberties and the righteous laws of Christian governments.

The Mohammedans felt that they were being ruled by Christians, that step by step, inevitably, Christian civilization was encroaching upon their political domain; that there was scarcely a single country left which was independent. Not only politically, but socially, the Moslem world was in a state of unrest. This unrest has increased every year with the terrific impact of our Western civilization ever since the opening of the Suez Canal and the trade routes to the Far East. Just as surely as we introduced our Western civilization, its best and its worst, its iniquity and its righteousness hurled themselves against the wide shores of the Moslem world and there occurred stupendous social and intellectual changes. It did not require foreign missions to undermine Islam. It did not require pioneer missionaries and propagandists and controversialists to disintegrate Islam. Our railways, our steamboat lines, our banking systems, our trade, our commerce, and much more, disintegrated Islam from beneath and from within so thoroughly that the educated Moslems of Calcutta, of Bombay, of Cairo, of Morocco, of Algiers, were fast drifting away and had no religion save nationalism. Consequently, before the war they were trying to save the ship of Islam. Some advised changing the course; others advised throwing overboard the cargo; some suggested readjusting the compass; but there were none on board bold enough to suggest a change of captains, and so the ship kept on its course.

And then came Germany with her ambitious program of conquest. The Prussian state, with her ally, Austria, deliberately attempted to use this world situation, this magazine of Pan-Islamic dynamite, in order to further her ends and to summon the Near East to rebellion and hate and so overturn all the conditions that were tending toward the evangelization, the civilization, the building up of the Near East. The proclamation of what was called a Holy War meant this.

Right here I wish to refer to certain books and evidence that prove the case in this indictment. It is very hard for one who while in Germany received from German Christians every kindness before the war, who has visited German prisoners in the camps in Egypt, conducted Christmas and Easter services for them and seen their hearts made glad by the ministrations of the Young Men's Christian Association—I say it is very hard for us to lay bare the dastardly policy of official Germany in the Near East. But the documents are absolutely convincing.

I mention a few books accessible to all readers: First of all, Professor Jastrow's book called "The War and the Bagdad Railway," gives the economic causes and the world-politics that lay back of Germany's policy. The second book is by a Hollander, Prof. Snouck Hurgronje, of Leyden, published only a few months after the outbreak of the war, and with terrible sarcasm named "The Holy War: 'Made in Germany'." It deals with the deepest issues of the war and arraigns German scholars and politicians for dishonesty in their dealing with this great question of civilization, which concerns also the Dutch, for they have 35,000,000 Moslems in their colonies. The third document is not yet a book but a series of articles which

I trust will be a book, the articles in the *World's Work*, by our Ambassador Morgenthau, whom everyone delights to honor, the man who defended Christian missions, who represented our country in Turkey through all those dreadful days that followed the declaration of war in Europe with such wonderful wisdom and utter heroism. No one can read his testimony and remain unconvinced that Germany *intended* the dreadful program afterward carried out. The report of Viscount Bryce, on the Armenian massacres, is also important, as it is an official document, every page of which is based on evidence not to be gainsaid. Lastly, we have the book by Dr. Harry Stuermer, one German who dared to tell the truth—a book that thrills with indignation: “Two War Years in Constantinople.”

The alliance of Germany with Islam for a program of massacre is the more astonishing when we recall that before the war most German scholars and statesmen had sober and sane judgment regarding this Moslem world problem. Schlegel, who wrote “The Philosophy of History,” closes his great chapter on the Saracen movement with these words: “A prophet”—that is, Mohammed—“without miracles, a religion without mysteries, and a morality without love, which has always encouraged a thirst for blood, and which began and ended in the most unbounded sensuality.” If Germany had that as her judgment of Islam, how could she ally herself to Turkey and let loose the Turks to massacre Armenian Christians?

Before the war, in 1911, the Germans held a colonial congress at Hamburg in which Professor Becker, a Roman Catholic missionary, and a Protestant missionary agreed on this resolution: “That as regards our African colonies, Islam is in no sense a preparer of the way for German culture, but the foe of Christian civilization.”

Professor Martin Hartmann, of Berlin, declared at the time of the Turko-Italian war that *"the threat of holy war is madness."* And he added: "Let this be a warning against the creation of unrest by the excitation of religious fanaticism. All civilized nations will unanimously stand together against any such attempt. *Islam is a religion of hate and of war. It must not be suffered to be the ruling principle in any nation of the civilized world.*"

Now all that makes it all the more astounding and all the more inexcusable that a nation, the majority of which is Protestant in history and traditions, should trample on her own conceptions of world righteousness and turn the Near East into a shambles, or try to turn it into a shambles, by proclaiming a Holy War. Long before the military party did so openly, the German diplomats and politicians had done so in purpose. As far back as 1906 certain leaders of colonial policy intended to overturn the Near East through a Holy War in order to break up British power and French colonial government. In 1906 Karl Peters, the German traveler, speaking of Pan-Islamism, used these words: "There is one factor which might fall on our side" (on the German side) "of the balance in the case of a world war, and might be made exceedingly useful to us. That factor is Pan-Islamism. It could be played off against Great Britain as well as against her ally, France. And if German policy is only bold enough"—mark the words—"she will be able through Pan-Islamism to fashion the dynamite which will blow up French and British rule from Morocco to Calcutta."*

And these words were published in an international magazine! Woe to our blindness and inability to read the signs of the times;

* See Zwemer's Islam, page 239.

they were heard and forgotten. That this was the German program in 1906 is evident from what followed and also from what preceded: the plans to absorb Turkey by colonial expansion and the economic penetration that followed the concession made of the Bagdad railway. The Kaiser's proclamation at Damascus in 1898 before the Tomb of Saladin that he was the defender of 300,000,000 Mohammedans, adding 100,000,000 for good measure, was another proof of this unholy alliance. German engineers controlled the building of the Hedjaz railway, which fundamentally was not a religious railway to carry pilgrims to Mecca and Medina, but a great military highway to link the tribes of Arabia to the Ottoman Empire, to further the Pan-Islamic program of Abdul Hamid, who even at that time was closely in touch with the German plans. You may read the whole story in Snouck Hurgronje's book and in Ambassador Morgenthau's articles. It is enough to say that a Pan-Islamic movement against Great Britain was the German intention.

"On the grave of the hater of Christianity," writes Hurgronje, "the Emperor of a world-empire which, as Becker reminds us, has Christianity as its State religion, spoke these words: 'The three hundred million Mohammedans that are scattered through the world may rest assured that the German Emperor will *eternally* be their friend.'" Under the guise of this eternal friendship Moslems were to drag the chariot of German political power across all Asia and North Africa!

Now was that plan a futile one? On the contrary, it was characterized by a deep knowledge of the undercurrents of restlessness and dissatisfaction, political, social, intellectual, religious, all over the Mohammedan world. It was founded on a keen knowledge

which the Germans had that the Mohammedan religion is not merely a State religion but a Church-State; that Moslems are bound together against all unbelievers by indissoluble vows; that to kill an infidel still merits reward and not punishment according to the Moslem law; that according to the Mohammedan definition of geography the whole world is divided into two parts, the "*Dar-ul-Islam*" and the "*Dar-ul-Harb*," the House of Mohammedan Faith and the House of War against Infidels; that the old program of the Caliphate still obtains, and that Mohammedans have as one of their great religious duties the bringing low of Christian nations to rise on their ruins and establish a Moslem world civilization. This is well known to any student of Islam. "For the Mohammedans of the old school who are in the vast majority there is no war but a religious war. Every effort to break the yoke of Christian rule is a 'holy war.'" (See Hurgronje, pp. 32-34.)

And so the ground was prepared for the sowing of this dreadful seed of intrigue, and they began their work by press propagandism. I have no time to go into details, but I will cite just one statement from a French colonial magazine: "This German propaganda took every imaginable form—tracts, pamphlets, treatises, maps, newspapers, telegrams, calendars, plays, songs, cinema films. Huge sums of money were spent in editing, distributing and producing this propagandist literature. It was carried on in many different languages. And the centers for mailing this inflammable literature were chosen with consummate cunning. The three centers from which it was sent to avoid the press censorship and to enter without the knowledge of the postal officials, were Barcelona, Spain. San Francisco, California, and Bangkok, Siam." You will find all the details in an article that appeared in the *Moslem World* last April.

Not only did Germany follow up this secret propagandism by local agents, but these pamphlets were sent by the hundreds to Afghanistan and Java and Africa from every quarter. When the time was ripe and Turkey was restless, seeing on which side of the fence she would throw her lot in the world war, then, without any more secrecy a Holy War was proclaimed in Constantinople by the leaders of the Mohammedan faith. The Sheikh of Islam, under order of the Sultan, proclaimed a Holy War. Here is the record as Morgenthau gives it:

"What Wangenheim meant by 'the big thing' became apparent in November, 1914, when the Sultan issued his declaration of war, the Holy War against the infidels." It consisted of a document of no less than ten thousand words, was published in various languages, and Ambassador Morgenthau gives nearly the whole document. Here is a single paragraph to show how this torch of fanaticism was carried into the dynamite factory of the Moslem world, "Take them and kill them wheresoever you come across them. Behold, we have delivered them into your hands and given you supreme power over them. He who kills even one unbeliever of those who rule over us, whether secretly or openly, shall be rewarded by God. Let every Moslem, in whatever part of the world he may be, swear a solemn oath to kill at least three or four of the infidels who rule over him, for they are the enemies of God and of the faith. A Moslem who does this shall be saved from the terrors of the day of judgment and of the resurrection of the dead. Has not the time come now when we should rise as the rising of one man, with a sword in one hand, in the other a gun, his pockets filled with death-dealing missiles, in his heart the light of the holy faith, that we should lift up our voices saying, 'India for the Indians, Java for the

Javanese Moslems, Algiers for the Algerian Moslems, Morocco for the Moroccan Moslems, Tunis for the Tunisians, Egypt for the Egyptian Moslems," etc.; "and the Ottoman Empire for the Turks and the Arabs"? "

Can you conceive of any plan, to put it in sober language, can you conceive of any plan that was more demonic in its conception and proposed execution than to set on flame the passions of men from Morocco to Calcutta by such a document? Can you think what would have happened to the million Copts of Egypt had the ten million Mohammedans obeyed that proclamation? Can you imagine what would have happened to the little handfuls of Christians and Jews in Morocco, Tunis, Algiers, in Northern Persia, in Southern Persia—aye, what would have happened again in India compared with the days of the Mutiny, if this program had unrolled from the borders of Afghanistan, down the valleys of the Punjab into Bengal; and India with sixty-seven million Mohammedans, would have had a Holy War on her hands, in these days of universal unrest, in these days when popular leaders desire democracy and thirst with a passion for nationalism? And yet that was Germany's deliberate program.

That there was a German plot to raise general revolt in India has been shown in the Report of the Rowlatt Commission (*The Englishman*, Calcutta, July 26, 1918). Bernhardt in his book, "Germany and the Next War" (1911), indicated the German hope to unite Moslem and Hindu against the British raj at any cost. But the Holy War "made in Germany" failed! It failed everywhere save in the one spot where the originators of the plan were there to see that it was carried out. We are told to ask that God may forgive our enemies, as Christ prayed. When Jesus Christ prayed

that prayer I believe He was praying for those sturdy Roman soldiers who in all their ignorance and stolid obedience to Roman law were driving the nails into His quivering flesh, and He said because He loved them, "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do." But the Pharisees and the Sadducees who cried, "Not this man, but Barabbas," had on their hearts the blood of the righteous One. Not the Turks, although their passions were stirred; not the Turks, although their religion gave them the opportunity; not the Turks, although they plunged the daggers into helpless villagers only because they were Christians and drove the poor Armenians into Arabia and Mesopotamia to die the death; not the Turks, but their masters, will have to wash from their hands the blood of half a million, some say a million, of our fellow Christians.

If it *could* be proved that Germany did not desire massacre or deportation (and no proof has yet been offered) it is clear she allowed the massacres to go on when it was absolutely in her power to arrest them. This is the testimony of missionaries, newspaper correspondents, Americans, neutrals, even some Germans—all agree in their verdict.

According to the League of Neutral Countries (*Ligue des Pays Neutres*) the mainspring back of the Armenian atrocities was, as has been suspected, the German General Staff. This League, the *Record of Christian Work* tells us, sent "from Amsterdam to all neutral lands a document regarding the massacres, based on an impartial and exhaustive examination of all the material on the subject. It describes how 200,000 persons, men, women and children, were torn from their homes and deported to Anatolia where they were enrolled in labor battalions, their only pay having been moistened bread.

Their property was taken and sold for the benefit of the Ottoman treasury and their persons subjected to every imaginable ill treatment. The little children left have been placed in an institution called the Orphanage of Panderma, founded by General Liman von Sander, where they are converted by force to Mohammedanism. The extermination of the Christian element is accomplished in this way systematically and surely in the whole Empire.

When the Grand Vizier was appealed to by the Ministry of Greece on the 27th of March, 1917, the answer came that the deportations of the Christian population were due to the formal demand of the General-in-Chief, Liman von Sander, and that the Ottoman Government *was obliged to yield to the threatenings of the General-in-Chief, who had declared that without this measure there would be no security for the army, adding that in time of war military necessities were above political reasons and that the German Headquarters Staff, to whom he had referred the matter, had given its assent.*"

Those few Germans who dared to speak up in defense of Armenia, such as Dr. Niepage and my friend, Dr. Johannes Lepsius, were arrested for high treason and met their fate.

And these things are not over. This little document has just come from the Rev. Stephen V. R. Trowbridge, in Cairo. just a brief story of the trail of the Cross in the Desert, a story of one little band of Armenians, 253 men and women and children, who left Cæsarea, in Asia Minor, and when they came to Trowbridge's camp, the Red Cross Camp just across the Canal, there were twenty-six left out of that party. They call that "deportation"! God in heaven, they call that "deportation"! Twenty-six men and women and

children left, out of 253 who started from their homes and were told that they were to leave their country for *political* reasons!

It is impossible to speak with restraint on the Armenian massacres unless we have lost all sympathy, all fellow feeling; unless you and I have made the Apostles' Creed a scrap of paper when we say "I believe in the communion of saints"; it is impossible to read Lord Bryce's report without tears; every page runs blood, and it is the blood of our fellow Christians.

Armenia! The name is like a sword
In every Christian heart. O martyr nation,
Eldest of all the daughters of the Word,
Exceeding all in bitter tribulation!

Armenia! The name is like a cry
Of agony that shrills around the sphere.
Bread, bread before her last starved children die
And tell to Christ how cold our hearts are here.

Armenia! A figure on a cross,
Pale, wasted, bleeding, with imploring eyes!
Except we save her, darkness lies across
All Christendom, shamed in her sacrifice.

Apart from those who escaped over the Russian frontier and the remnant who sought refuge in Egypt, the race exists no longer. The seal has been set on the bloodiest deed that ever stained the annals even of the Ottoman Turks.

Yet this program of a Holy War of extermination failed, and it did fail *except in Armenia*.

Somehow I love that prophetic word of the editor of the *Ohio State Journal*, and will carry it with me through the war and I trust afterwards. He said: "There are many reasons that are being given why we are going to win the war. There is only *one*. It is God." That is the only reason why we shall win the war,

"For right is right, since God is God;
And truth the day must win;
To doubt would be disloyalty,
To falter would be sin."

The Holy War, "made in Germany," according to Professor Hurgronje's phrase, so sarcastic and yet so true, was doomed to failure from the outset, although it was planned with consummate skill and the expenditure of millions of dollars in propaganda and intrigue. How could Turkey find her salvation in Germany's program of economic absorption? There is no love lost between the Ottoman and the Prussian. The offer of the eternal friendship of the Kaiser for Moslems deceived nobody. The majority of the higher classes outside of, and even in, Turkey (except the inner clique of the Committee of Union and Progress) remained immune against "this politico-religious mixture of deceit and nonsense."

"The Holy War," writes Dr. Harry Stuermer, a German by birth and until recently by his sympathy and activity, "the Holy War was doomed to failure from the very start from its obvious artificiality. It was a miserable farce or rather a tragi-comedy, the present ending of which, namely, the defection of the Arabian Caliphate, is the direct contrary of what had been aimed at with such fanatical urgency and the use of such immoral propaganda."

Doubtless Germany hoped for success first of all in the valley of the Nile—then still bound to the Ottoman Empire on paper. But the program of revolt failed first of all in Egypt, where it had if anywhere the most brilliant chances of success. Even most of the Egyptian nationalists remained loyal to Great Britain, some of them by compulsion,* some by persuasion, but the vast majority of their own free will, *by conviction*. The cotton crop, the banks, the righteous rule of Great Britain, the newspaper propagandism on the side of righteousness, the gathering of other allies around France and Great Britain, and neutral opinion regarding Germany's work in Belgium—all these put together in the scale kept Egypt loyal. Although the Turks were on the Eastern front, and the Senussi Dervishes on the Western front, and the submarine on the North, throughout the length and breadth of the Nile Valley not a single Christian lost his life during the war because of Moslem fanaticism. The population knew to whose government they owed the development of agriculture, the increase of land values, the growth of prosperity and the progress of education. Ancient Egypt was the gift of the Nile; modern Egypt is the gift of Kitchener and Cromer and the other builders of empire who toiled for the good of the *fellahin*. The older people remembered the day of the Turkish Pashas and forced labor with a shudder. They were loyal to Britain. Thousands of Egyptian Moslems working as labor corps helped to build the highways that led the army of General Allenby to victory in Palestine, and so Moslems had their part in delivering Jerusalem from German and Turk!

Morocco remained loyal, and Algiers; and India remained loyal in spite of local troubles in one or two centers. In the whole British Empire its ninety million Moslems refused to fight the Holy War

against Great Britain at the call "made in Germany." They remained faithful in the payment of war taxes. They fought side by side with Great Britain and France in the trenches in Mesopotamia, at the Palestine front, Moslems fighting Turks; and the same was true at Gallipoli. They worked for the Red Cross Relief. They remained true to Great Britain and refused to hearken to the voice of fanaticism because they heard the call of our common humanity.

Captain Raymond Recouly, in an account of his war mission in the Sahara (*Scribner's Magazine*, September, 1918), shows how not only on the coast but in the far interior the Arabs were and continued loyal to the French in spite of all German intrigue. Their expression of it by one of the Bedouin chiefs is characteristic: "Never before has our country been so prosperous, our people so well off. They sell their sheep for two or three times as much as before the war; the French Government makes large allotments to the families of our soldiers, exactly the same, in fact, as those granted to the native French combatants. The wealth, the prosperity, and the tranquillity of our country are your work. We cannot stand aside, therefore, selfishly enjoying our good fortune, while France, who has been fighting for three years, is called upon to make more and more sacrifices."

Not only did God in His providence through the wise administration of France and Great Britain and by the strong arm of their forces that rallied for the support of the Empire from every colony and possession, counteract this dreadful program of a Holy War, He was equally able to unroll His own program in the Near East. Germany's program in two words was this, *Deutschland über alles*, and *Deutschland über Allah*; Deutschland over everything, and Deutschland controlling Allah, through Allah's prophet, Mohammed,

and his successors in the Caliphate. But the program failed, and the result of the failure was a new era of religious freedom in the Near East, and that is far more important than to remember events in the past which in their horror of massacre

“. . . . Stir a fever in the blood of age,
And make the infants' sinews strong as steel"

against Germany. It is far more important for us to see God's program for our lives in the new Near East than to thank God for what He held in check of Germany's program in the old Near East.

God has through this war marvelously ushered in a new era of government. Morocco is developing rapidly on economic, social and intellectual lines under France, even during the war. More railways have been built and highways and public buildings in Morocco during the four years of the war than in the forty years that preceded it. Algeria has developed on every line since the war, also in the line of tolerance and favor toward Christian missions; and our Methodist brethren have one of the finest and most strategic points for winning the whole of North Africa in their new mission on the Algerian coast. Tunis and Tripoli have been forever freed not only of Turkish rule but of Turkish intrigue by the campaign from Egypt against the Senussi Dervishes; Egypt has become a British protectorate.

Shut off from communications with her base of supplies in Germany, Turkey has no choice but complete surrender. It is inconceivable that this surrender will mean anything else than a new era of stable, righteous, impartial government of some form or other for her millions of people. A German, Dr. Stuermer, wrote in June, 1917:

"The fall of Turkey is the greatest blow that could have been dealt to German 'world-politics;' it is a disappointment that will have the gravest consequences. But from the standpoint of culture, human civilization, ethics, the liberty of the peoples and justice, historical progress, the economic development of wide tracts of land of the greatest importance from their geographical position, it is one of the most brilliant results of the war, and one to be hailed with unmixed joy."

He wrote before the fall of Damascus and the victory that resulted in the freeing of Syria and Asia Minor!

As for Arabia, "Arabia's desert ranger to Him now *dares* to bend the knee." An area of a million square miles has been freed forever from the Turk. The Arab program fitted in with the program of the Allies. They had been weary of the Turk for religious reasons for many decades, and they had grown more weary of the Turk for financial reasons for a longer period. When the time came for a revolution, the princes of the interior and the Sherif of Mecca united their forces and hurled back the Turks, took Mecca and established a new kingdom. Our new Allies have a glorious flag and program. It is Arabia for the Arabs under British protection and with that program the missionary societies may be in hearty accord. One of our missionaries, that splendid pioneer, Dr. Paul W. Harrison, has just gone all the way inland to the capital of old Arabia, Riadh, a place of Wahabi fanaticism, without military escort, welcomed by the Arabian chiefs. A letter has just come to me describing his tour in another part of independent Arabia, in which he says: "I have just gotten back from a tour into the Oman country, from the Dubai side. The cordiality of the people left

nothing to be desired. I carried quite a heavy equipment, and we did a considerable number of operations, some forty or more major operations in the course of the trip. It was a unique experience to have men lined up waiting their turn begging to be operated on. I suppose that I saw five times as many on that trip who needed the desired operations as I was able to attend to.

"I was even asked by the leading men of Sharga, a city near Dubai, whether a petition signed by the chiefs of the different cities of that district would have any chance of getting me appointed to permanent work among them. I was compelled to tell them that I did not suppose that it would be possible for some years, with the Mission so short-handed."

In Western Arabia the changes wrought by the war are even greater. In October, 1917, when I returned from a visit to China, the French mail steamer called at Jiddah to accommodate some Moslem notables from North Africa returning from pilgrimage. A glimpse was then given us of Jiddah, not under Abdul Hamid nor under the Young Turks, but under the government of the new king of Arabia. Events have moved rapidly since the declaration of independence in the Hedjaz. It hardly seemed like the same town, and certainly not like the same backward government of the Turks. Instead of landing from the anchorage in the outer harbor by sailing ships through the surf, steam launches met us. Most of the passengers went on shore to see the sights as freely as they would at Aden or Port Said. The king of the Hedjaz has reformed many of the abuses of the Turkish régime. The charge for a camel for the journey from Jiddah to Mecca and Arafat and back is now three to five pounds sterling, compared with ten pounds in the old days.

The luggage of pilgrims is well looked after, and everything is done for their comfort. Water is given free to poor pilgrims and sold very cheaply to others.

The road between Jiddah and Mecca, formerly infested with brigands, is now quite safe even for pedestrians. Bedouin police accompany the travelers from one police station in the road to another, and all pilgrims are free to stay in Mecca after the Haj, or go anywhere they like, whereas formerly the government used to keep pilgrims at Mecca for at least a fortnight after the Haj, so that they might spend all their money. Several primary schools and a military school were opened in Mecca a year ago; primary schools have also been started in Jiddah. An agricultural and geological school will be opened, we were told, for the Arab Government has sent to Egypt and elsewhere for professors and teachers. The king has encouraged teachers of theology and expounders of the traditions of Mohammed in the sanctuary of Mecca. Three courses of religious instruction are already given daily on the lines of that given at Al Azhar University in Cairo. There is still plenty of room for improvement in sanitation, but the newly organized municipalities of Jiddah and Mecca are endeavoring to keep the towns clean. Incinerators have been established and also a hospital. The public works department is rapidly widening the streets of Mecca, and steps are also being taken to improve the customs service. The government is also planning the planting of trees in Jiddah; the post office now sells Meccan stamps; a big weekly paper called *Al Kibla* gives news of the war; and finally a telephone service connects Jiddah with the capital city of Mecca. I myself heard conversation from the Mystic City as I waited at one of the government offices in Jiddah. Was it a cry from Macedon?

The whole of ancient Mesopotamia offers a virgin field, not only for economic exploitation—and it will surely be that, with oil wells and cotton fields, and wheat fields—but a great field for Christian education and the ministry of healing and love and fellowship through Jesus Christ our Lord. Here is an item in proof. Our missionary, Mr. Van Ess, on his furlough, raised twenty-five thousand dollars for a boys' high school at Busrah, since the British Government gave him this promise, "For every dollar you raise for educational work the British Government will put down dollar for dollar for the new educational program in Mesopotamia."

Sir William Willecock's irrigation scheme has been put into working order and it is expected that 200,000 tons of grain will be harvested this year. The wilderness of Turkish misrule is beginning to blossom like the rose of England. Busrah of Sinbad the Sailor is a thing of the past and Bagdad of the Turks will soon be forgotten. River navigation, railways, roads, electric light, drainage, ice factories, "the movies" and English newspapers all herald the new era of progress and enlightenment.

I will not speak of Abyssinia, although over that country, too, you might write the blessing that came through the war in the words of Scripture, "Surely the wrath of men shall praise thee, and with the remainder of wrath thou shalt gird thyself." German intrigue found its way in Abyssinia as well, took a Christian youth, one of the princes of the old dynasty of Menelik, made him a Moslem prince, although his name was "Child of Jesus," and he gathered together out of the caves of Adullam all those who hated the old rule (hundreds, they say, of the Abyssinians who turned Moslems for political reasons), and overturned the old government. Then

God stepped in through Great Britain and France and Italy, the thing was put to an end, this man was incarcerated somewhere in Abyssinia, and the Christian queen restored. The last news is that the Swedish mission reports ten thousand nominal Mohammedans have become nominal Christians because of this political overturning. After we win the war—nay, even now Abyssinia offers a wide-open door for the Gospel. There is an unprecedented demand for the Word of God, and the Bible Society can scarcely keep up with the trade demand for Bibles and Testaments.

When we came down the Red Sea Coast in a French steamer and stopped at the port of Jibuti, I had scarcely heard of the town except as a harbor for coal. It is now the port of Abyssinia; the biweekly trains come rolling in, carrying grain, gums, coffee, and other produce for the armies at the Western front.

In Persia both the military and the political situation have greatly changed in the war. The Anglo-Russian agreement is a thing of the past, but the advent of reform and an administration of the country for the good of the people under some form of protectorate or European council is nearer than it ever was. Even Afghanistan may open its gateways to the King of kings now that the jealousies of rival governments are at an end. This war has also seen the preparation of great military highways and railways in the Near East which will be used for the Gospel when the New Era opens.

The German dream—and it was a great conception—of a steel highway spanning the Bosphorus and reaching to Bagdad and Busrâh will yet prove true. But it will be a highway for all nations and not for the highwaymen among the nations. The redeemed shall ride there. It shall be called the way of holiness. A steel bridge

now spans the Suez Canal. You may take from Cairo the sleeping car with diner attached and enter a new Jerusalem—with a small “n,” not yet with a capital. You may go all the way from Busrah by river steamer to Bagdad or on the parallel railway built by the British Government. I do not think that any censor will now object to my saying that this section of the Bagdad railway is reaching completion. East and West, God is preparing highways for His Gospel. He is preparing the hearts of Moslems, too.

“ The morning light is breaking,
The darkness disappears,
The sons of earth are waking
To penitential tears ;
Each breeze that sweeps the ocean
Brings tidings from afar,
Of nations in commotion,
Prepared for *Zion's* war.”

It is not the beginning of the end, but it is the beginning of God's program for the Near East—for rapid evangelism on a larger scale and with larger faith than heretofore.

They often ask me whether I am premillennial or postmillennial in my views. I have never had much time to study the question thoroughly. My inclinations are to expect the personal return of my Lord and Saviour with great longing as imminent. My daily prayer is “Even so, come, Lord Jesus, come quickly.” But when I think of this great world war and the issues involved, and the mighty program of God for the Near East, I am reminded of a countryman who came to New York for the first time and saw one of those

dreadful excavations alongside the avenue, forty or fifty feet deep into the bowels of the earth, the edges all ragged and jagged, and the houses on the edge almost toppling over; the countryman thought it was the result of an earthquake, but the people in New York knew it was only the foundations for a new skyscraper. This earthquake in the Near East, is it the beginning of the end, or is God sinking down His new foundations of righteousness and truth and equity to give these nations a new chance? In thinking and speaking of the Lord's return we must not forget first of all to finish the work He has given us to do. The Gospel must first be preached in all the world for a witness. We must occupy the unoccupied fields till He come. There never was such an opportunity in Palestine, Turkey, Arabia and Egypt as to-day. Our belief in Christ's speedy return should include a program of immediate large financial investment and sacrifice!

When the Boxer uprising took place in China the lukewarm friends of missions and its opponents said, "That is the end of your missionary program in China." It was only the beginning. When the massacres took place in Madagascar, such was the verdict of some people. When the infant church in Uganda suffered martyrdom it was the beginning of a great spiritual harvest. God's purpose is unchangeable. He makes the wrath of men to praise Him and with the remainder of wrath makes Himself a girdle (Ps. 76:10) to enter for further conquests. So will it be in the Near East after the war.

"A new day of opportunity," says Doctor James L. Barton, "is to open in Asia Minor. Increasing prosperity, a large degree of

liberty, the wide spread of education and the heart searching which always follows national calamity will produce the most challenging missionary opportunity the world has ever faced. We confidently expect the repetition of the astonishing series of events that followed the Boxer uprising in China. When the door opens once more to the Moslem world we believe it will bring to Christendom the greatest challenge known in missionary history."

The American Board of Commissioners for Foreign Missions calls for one hundred and seventy-five workers for Turkey. Scores will be needed for Persia, Arabia, Syria, and Palestine, not to speak of the vast stretches of Central Asia and Russian territories open after the war. Who will volunteer for this army of reconstruction? This letter received from a Young Men's Christian Association secretary is a partial reply and shows how the war-environment will help arouse us to after-the-war problems and their solution:

"Several of our men who are doing Christian work for the army in Mesopotamia at present are extremely interested in the native people of the country and in the possibility of mission work among them after the war. Several of us are student volunteers and we have decided to write and ask if you will tell us what are the plans of yourself and others for the carrying on of the missionary propaganda under the new conditions which will prevail after the war."

Shall we tell these heroes of the trenches who have paid for the advance by life and blood that the new era will mean the Kingdom of Christ for all the millions of Western Asia? Shall we challenge the future by making all the Near East "safe for democracy"?

“Was Freedom the milk we were bred on,
Is Treason the viper we tread on,
Was it Liberty’s altar we bled on,
In years that are numbered in gold?
Is the blood in our veins growing paler,
Are our young men unwitting of valor,
Shall the battle hour see you a quailer
Or the peal of the drum find you cold?
In the name of Jehovah, be bold—
For we move as a tale that is told.

For Freedom, the milk we were bred on;
For the Liberty altar we bled on—
Go forth to the Great Armageddon,
Go forth with a prayer and a song!
In the name of Jehovah, be strong.”

The spiritual forces of the Near East have also been mobilized for the Armageddon of God,—not under the banner of military leaders, however brave and victorious, but under His banner who rides the white horse and whose name is the Word of God. The missionary enterprise in the Near East faces a crisis because it never before had such an opportunity. If the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the Church we may look forward with faith to such a harvest of souls as has never gladdened reapers in all the blood-soaked provinces of Western Asia. Where are the reapers?

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